

Feeding Babies Under 1 Year Old

What to Feed

Breast milk is best for babies.

Breast milk is easy to digest and provides the nutrients babies need.

Breast milk helps babies:

- Grow
- Develop
- Fight infection
- Stay healthy



If breast milk is not available, feed babies infant formula with iron.

Infant formula meets a baby's nutrient needs and helps them grow, develop, and stay healthy.



Do not replace breast milk or formula with cow milk, goat milk, or other beverages. These do not meet a baby's nutrient needs.

How to Feed

Healthy babies can control how much they eat. They eat when they are hungry and stop when they are full. Feed babies according to cues listed below. Avoid overfeeding.

Signs of hunger

- Wakes, becomes restless
- Sucks on lips, tongue, fingers, or fists
- Opens mouth and turns head when touched on chin or lips
- Shows eagerness and excitement about feeding
- Crying (late signal of hunger when hunger cues are missed)

Signs of fullness

- Seals or closes lips
- Turns head away
- Sucks less or stops sucking
- Spits out nipple
- Pushes away
- Cries and fusses if feeding continues

Feed a baby in a safe, supportive, and calm environment.

- Always hold infant when breast or bottle feeding
- Provide support and make eye contact
- Do not prop the bottle or put baby to bed with the bottle

Things to Avoid

- **Never feed honey to babies under one year of age. It may cause botulism, a serious infection.**
- **Do not put juice or other sugar-containing beverages in a bottle.**
- **Do not feed babies food in a bottle.**
- **Limit foods that have a lot of salt.**

Feeding Solids

Breast milk or formula meets all of a baby's nutrient needs up to 6 months of age.

At 4–6 months, many babies show readiness to eat solids. They are ready when they can:

- Sit upright with support
- Hold their head steady
- Close their lips around a spoon
- Keep food in their mouth and swallow it



Introduce one new food at a time. Typical first foods are strained or pureed meats, and iron-fortified single grain infant cereal.

As a baby eats more solid food, they will drink less breast milk or formula. Follow the directions from parents and their provider.